

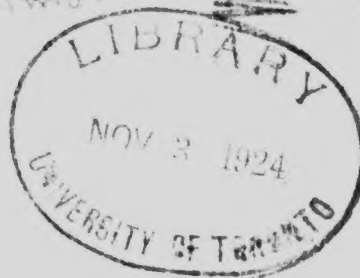
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**CONCERNING the ATTACKS
of PROF. MATTHEWS
on the BIBLE.**

**OPEN LETTER to the BAPTISTS
of ONTARIO and QUEBEC**

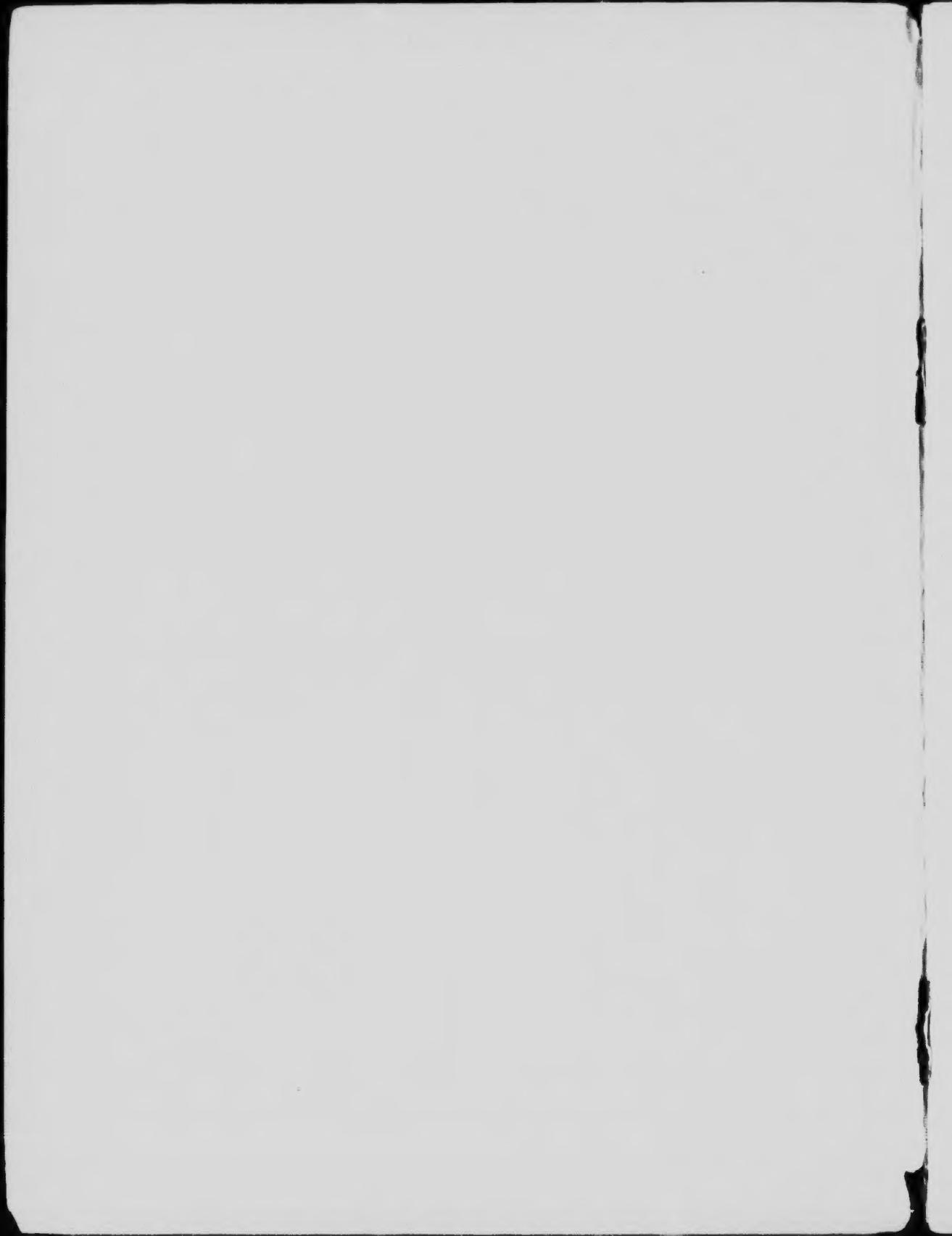
by
Elmore Harris (1854-1912)



**TORONTO, CANADA
May, 1910**



**Concerning the Attacks of
Prof. Matthews on the Bible**



Concerning the Attacks of Professor Matthews on The Bible

OPEN LETTER TO THE BAPTISTS OF ONTARIO
AND QUEBEC.

DEAR BRETHREN:—

I took the responsibility on the 11th of May, 1909, to call in question the teaching of Professor Matthews in McMaster University, on the ground that it was disturbing and destructive. My position in the matter has been so frequently misrepresented that I owe it to myself and the denomination to make the following statement. I have no personal feeling against Professor Matthews. I regret he is a factor in the matter. The question is very much larger and greater than any one person. That there has been unrest on this question of Biblical teaching since Professor Matthews came into the institution is only too well known. I have been a member of the Board of Governors many years. Time and again I had heard complaints of the attacks being made on the Old Testament by Professor Matthews. Among others, Dr. Norton, our Superintendent of Home Missions, became troubled over this matter. He related to me what he personally had learned of the upsetting teaching of Professor Matthews. I simply took the responsibility of voicing what a great many in the denomination had thought, and were thinking, and still are thinking.

The matter came to a head when I was furnished to me a stenographic report of the lectures delivered by Professor Matthews in the Session of 1907-8. This report was by the late Rev. Glyn Williams, who was at the time of his death, in June last, the beloved pastor of Chesley Church, a consecrated, holy man. Before coming to Canada he had been pastor of large Baptist churches in Wales. He was a stenographer holding an English diploma of high standing, and was for twelve years Secretary of the Shorthand Education Committee, so that when he became a

student at McMaster University he was accustomed to take the lectures of the various Professors in shorthand from which to prepare his class work. He therefore had in his possession after he left the University the notes of Professor Matthews' lectures which he had taken while in his class, and it was these notes which he furnished to me later when the question of Professor Matthews was being discussed. I mention this circumstance only because it has been insinuated in some quarters that at the time Rev. Glyn Williams took these notes, he did so in order to furnish outside parties with Mr. Matthews' teaching, thus acting as a spy on Professor Matthews—which is utterly untrue. Attempt has also been made to discredit the notes as not correctly representing the Professor's views. But these notes, Mr. Williams stated, were verbatim so far as they went, though he did not claim that every discussion in the class between Professor and student (of which there were many and strenuous) was taken verbatim. It is quite evident also that the Committee of the Senate had confidence in the accuracy of the report of the lectures in that they employed them word for word in some cases in setting forth the views of Professor Matthews.

So much for the report of the lectures. When it came into my hands and I saw the destructive character of the teaching, I made a complaint to the Board of Governors. The complaint was referred to the Senate, and the Board has never yet passed upon the question. In the Senate a motion was made naming a Committee of five members to investigate the charges, but at the suggestion of others in the Senate two names were added—Dr. Frank Sanderson, who was known to be strongly in sympathy with Professor Matthews, and Chancellor McKay, who desired to be on the Committee. The report of the findings of the Committee has been printed and copies can be had by applying to E. J. Bengough, Registrar of the University. I would that all who read this letter would apply for a copy of the printed report and read it as well. The *last act* of the Senate in connection with this matter was to direct the publication of the report. *That publication in its present form* places me in a false position and does me an injustice in not printing the stenographic report of the lectures by Professor Matthews, as taken by the Rev. Glyn Williams, which was *part* of my communication to the Board, nor the report of the additional lectures 18 and 19 furnished to the Chancellor for the Committee by the Rev. Mr. Williams. Their perusal is necessary to form a

judgment in the matter. The Senate by a majority vote accepted the voluminous report (some 40 typewritten pages) of the Committee, and by the same majority agreed upon what should be handed out to the newspapers. But I would point out that at the meeting of the Senate referred to only 17 out of the 33 members were present when the vote was taken. Of the 17, six were members of the Special Committee. Of the 11 remaining, seven voted for the report and four against it. Of this seven the majority were members of the Faculty, who would naturally feel a hesitancy about voting against a fellow Professor. The members present outside of the Committee had never seen this lengthy report before it was submitted to the Senate, and the minority very properly protested against the action in rushing through the report at that Session without allowing proper opportunity for consideration.

As to that report itself, it is true that the Committee of the Senate found the Scotch verdict of "*not proven*," but even by a fair reading of their report in the light of the reported lectures, my complaint that the teaching was destructive, etc., would seem to be fairly well grounded. The following is taken from the Committee's report:—

NINE ARTICLES.

"From a careful scrutiny of the lectures and from interviews with himself, the Committee submits the following as a summary of Professor Matthews' views on the Bible in general and the Old Testament in particular:—

"1. That it would be nearer the truth to say that the Bible contains, rather than that it is the Word of God, inasmuch as if it were actually the Word of God, it would be perfect in every detail—language, syntax, chronology, etc.

"2. That it chronicles and preserves the steps in a progressive divine revelation.

"3. That one mind runs through all, no matter how many hands were at work in its composition.

"4. That it contains a unique element, an element of new truth and religious content not found in other literature which cannot be accounted for on any naturalistic grounds. It is this element that constitutes the Bible a revelation from God.

"5. That the canon of the Old Testament came into being as the result of the demand for certain books of value to the religious consciousness, both on the part of the individual and the Church.

"6. That the study of the Old Testament reveals difficulties, problems and discrepancies as to facts and details which can be accounted for most satisfactorily on the theory that the writers, in addition to the common Semitic tradition, had access to different historical documents which did not harmonize in every particular.

"7. That these difficulties, problems and discrepancies do not in the least invalidate the religious message or the religious value of the various books. So far as their religious message is concerned they are infallible.

"8. That the Messianic note runs through the whole of the Old Testament, and that its types and prophecies find their ultimate realization in Christ.

"9. That so far as the Pentateuch is concerned, the Professor holds to the Mosaicity, rather than to the Mosaic authorship of its various books; that though its core is Mosaic, it bears evidence of development, growth and amplification at the hands of other writers, and that the same principle of development obtains in regard to the priesthood, the cultus, and the various legal codes embedded in the Pentateuch."

Of the Professor's teaching regarding the Bible, the Committee said in the report:—"The Committee readily admits that in the case of the particular course referred to, an undue proportion of time and emphasis was given to the problems, discrepancies and contradictions in the Old Testament." "The Committee would be free to admit that on Professor Matthews' teaching, the idea of an absolutely infallible, inerrant Bible will have to be given up."

It is not my intention to follow up all the fallacies and sophistries of these Nine Articles. On their face the *man* part is magnified and the *God* part is minimized. In Article No. 1 man is setting up the standard by which the Book is to be tested, and the sentence seems incomplete, as after the words "*inasmuch as if it were actually the Word of God,*" the words "*which it is not*" are implied to round off the meaning. "The unique element," the "element of new truth and religious content," may be found in such works as Ruskin, Tennyson and Carlyle, but our people generally, we think, hold that Divine inspiration marks off the Old Testament from other literature. That the Bible is said to be gotten together as the result of the demand for certain books of value to the religious consciousness, both on the part of the individual and the Church, is startling.

Also our people hold that Christ was the long predicted Messiah, that in Christ Prophecy was *fulfilled*. Mark the word *fulfilled*. Now the Prophecy in Isaiah, Ch. 7, v. 14, is challenged by Professor Matthews and we are told there is a Messianic note (how little or how much that means we know not) which finds not *fulfilment* but "realization" in Christ. That is, Christ fitted in with this "note." A studied distinction is drawn between "fulfilment" and "realization." These are days of fine distinctions with the "Higher Critics." They will not say that prophecy was *fulfilled* in Christ. They grudgingly concede that some indefinite

Messianic note finds its "ultimate realization" in Christ. So some readily admit the Divinity of Christ—they say there is something Divine in all men, but while admitting the Divinity of Christ in this sense, they deny the Deity of Christ.

These Nine Articles require little comment if read in the light of the lectures. The drift is apparent.

CHARACTER OF THE LECTURES.

As I have said, the publication of the report in its present form does me the injustice of not including the stenographic report of the lectures by Professor Matthews, which were part of my communication to the Board, or the additional lectures furnished by Mr. Glyn Williams to the Chancellor for the Committee. These lectures form the gravamen of the charge. Among other things said by Professor Matthews in his lectures as reported by Rev. Glyn Williams, are the following extracts:—

Of the Early Chapters of Genesis.

Professor Matthews places himself on record as regarding the earlier chapters of Genesis as folk lore. In his 19th lecture, for example, he says, referring to Genesis:—

"Story of creation, marital relations between gods and man (Gen. 6) exactly in line with folklore of every people under the sun. . . . This is a little folklore."

As to the Prophecy of the Coming of the Messiah.

Professor Matthews in his second lecture refers to Matthew, chap 1, v. 23 ("Behold a virgin shall . . . bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel"), and Isaiah, chap. 7, v. 14, as follows:—

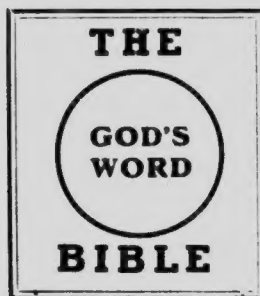
A Student—"A virgin shall conceive! That is a case of specific prediction."

The Professor (Matthews)—"No, I should not say it was a case of specific prediction. Any marriageable woman may conceive."

The Bible is not, but contains the Word of God.

The Professor in Lecture 1, says:—

“This Book contains God’s Word, which, as you will appreciate, is different from saying that the Bible is God’s Word. The question may be presented in the following diagram:—



The Division of the Pentateuch.

The Professor in his 19th lecture proceeds to attack the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and though the theory has been frequently exploded, to attribute the Pentateuch to different authors, and to divide the same into the main Documents of J and E.

Limitations of Jesus.

Professor Matthews in his second lecture says:—

“Jesus has to accommodate Himself to the form of mind characteristic of the times; He has to accommodate Himself to the grammar, has to accommodate Himself to the philosophy of His own day, and to whatever realm of science the people might be in.”

As to the Flood.

Professor Matthews in his first lecture, in common with other Higher Critics, makes an attack on the record of this event and charges inconsistencies and contradictions which certainly do not exist in the record of the Flood as given in the Bible.

Verbal Inspiration.

For the view entertained by some of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures the Professor has not much reverence or favor, and says in the 15th lecture:—

“Thus saith Jehovah through Moses. I wish we could get away from our inheritance from Grecian oracles. Behind the scenes Deity was—it may not be much reverence—Deity was behind the scenes twitching the tongue of the utterer, and thus dropping out syllables as they ought to be—the man not conscious of what he was saying.”

Contradictions.

The Professor in his second lecture says, referring to the author of the Book of Chronicles:—

“In quoting literally from Kings and quoting a fact . . . the author contradicted himself. He puts a statement down, forgetting that he has already put down something that contradicts it.”

The First Two Chapters of Genesis.

He emphasizes in lecture two what he regards as the two inconsistent stories of creation in the first two chapters, and says:—

“You are in danger of losing a man of intelligence, an Oxford graduate, it may be, by not facing these problems. There are sermons that will have to go with the bones (possibly some lectures, also). As far as these two chapters are concerned we cannot bring them into order.”

Concerning Miracles.

Professor Matthews in his 18th lecture says:—

“What is superhuman in the Old and New Testament if we knew all about it it would not be more superhuman than what we see to-day . . . The language is a popular one. We use

similar language to-day. 'It is a miracle that that man escaped death.' 'It is a miracle that the train did not run into the rocks the other day.' 'It was a miracle that a man was not killed.' "

"Thus Saith the Lord."

Professor Matthews in his 15th lecture says:—

"What, then is the significance of 'thus saith Jehovah through Moses'? A cold, logical people making a statement would be a very different from an imaginative people making it who revelled in the gorgeous. We have to study the man who makes the statement. 'Thus saith Jehovah' or 'thus say the gods' is common phraseology of all Semitic literature. The Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Arabians, they all use it. Thus in the code of Khammu-rabi you have 'The gods spoke to me, told me to do this, to fashion this.' . . . The phrase 'thus saith Jehovah' in itself will prove nothing more than 'thus Merodach saith.' "

Origin of Hebrew Institutions.

Prof. Matthews in his 15th lecture says:

"The Hebrew people took their institutions, their sacrifices, their Passover, their ark, their temple—they took all these from the older Semitic sources."

The "older Semitic sources" were *heathen* sources. What then becomes of the Divine Revelation of Israel's religion?

Gentle Reader, was it not high time some one objected?

"THE RELIGIOUS MESSAGE."

The suggestion that "The Religious Message" alone is infallible is open to grave objection. If a large part of the Bible may be rejected as saturated with error, the unbeliever will probably

take the liberty of rejecting the balance, whether you call it religious or otherwise. The danger of the position is pointedly expressed by a well-known author as follows:—

“A Bible held to be vaguely true in matters of faith and life, but without specification of what these are or any sure rule to ascertain them, could never be an authoritative standard at all; but men would be driven out of Scripture altogether on to the quicksands of mere human opinion, along with avowed rationalists.”

And again:—

“This, then, is what this theory would lead to. It would take away that Word of God on which earnest, believing men from the days of Moses until now have amid the watery waste of human opinion placed their faith as on an everlasting rock, and looking around from that Divine foundation upon the transitoriness and uncertainty of all human thought . . . in the language of ancient prophecy have said, ‘All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away, but the Word of the Lord endureth forever.’ They dare to assert that this Eternal Rock is largely sand . . . while they . . . fail to tell which is rock and which is sand.”

NO DENIAL FROM PROFESSOR MATTHEWS.

No denial of the utterance of these views in his lectures, or that he holds these views, or any undertaking that he will desist from inculcating them, has ever been given to the Senate, and the Committee brought no statement of any denial having been made before the Committee, except in the following guarded language:

Page 4 of report:—

“In answer to the inquiries of the Committee, Mr. Williams stated that the lectures were verbatim, so far as they went, but that of course they did not contain all that the Professor had said in the class, nevertheless they faithfully mirrored the Professor.

“Professor Matthews, however, on being questioned, stated that they did not correctly mirror his teaching, that they bore

evidence of being a selection rather than a verbatim report, and that they contradicted his position on essential points, and that Mr. Williams had frequently left out qualifying adjectives and adverbs which would greatly modify the meaning in many places. *While not expressing any opinion as to whether the report of the lectures mirror the real teaching of Professor Matthews or not,* the Committee were impressed with its fragmentary and elliptical character, especially in some places!"

One would reasonably expect something more definite. The only specific instance of alleged inaccuracy mentioned by the Committee before the Senate, on behalf of the Professor, was that in Mr. Williams' notes the Professor was credited with having said that Amos was the *first* teacher of righteousness, and Professor Matthews said that what he did say was that Amos was the *first great* teacher of righteousness. The Committee took pains to elaborate this instance on more than one occasion. That seemed to be the one instance in which Professor Matthews prepared to take direct issue with the Rev. J. Glyn Williams. Why Professor Matthews was not specifically interrogated as to the startling statements in the lectures and a specific, definite answer obtained, is not explained. The report of the Committee was made to the Senate on the 27th day of May. Subsequently at a meeting held on October 21st, 1909, when the consideration of the draft report of the Convention was before the body for consideration, a number of the extracts as above set out from the lectures were read to the Senate in the presence of Professor Matthews, and it was pointed out that up to that time no denial had been made by the Professor, and *no denial was then made*, and up to this date there is no denial.

UNFAIRNESS OF THE COMMITTEE AND ITS REPORT.

I think I may fairly take exception to the course the Committee adopted. I was notified to be present on one occasion only, when I was asked to make a statement. Of the other meetings of the Committee I had no notice. In the lengthy report of the Com-

mittee they found no room for the evidence of the chief witness, the Rev. J. Glyn Williams, nor for the report of the lectures taken in shorthand. They gave at great length the so-called testimony of the students. They chose what students should be called. I had no opportunity of questioning them or any other persons called.

Also the Committee in its report referred to an interview had with Prof. Matthews by the Hon. John Dryden, Dr. Hughson and myself in the previous year, in which the printed report says:—

“They presented a report to the Senate at a subsequent meeting, to the effect that they found Professor Matthews sound on all the fundamentals of Baptist faith and practise.”

This statement is without foundation. That interview dealt solely with the Professor's attitude towards the Old Testament Scripture, and not a single question was asked him as to his view of Baptist faith and practise.

The report makes pointed reference to annotations or exclamations in brackets in the course of the report of the lectures made by Mr. Williams. These were all made by Mr. Williams in his notes as he took down the lectures, and were not made, as wrongly stated by the Committee, for my information or benefit.

A report that Mr. Williams had withdrawn his charges against the teaching of Professor Matthews having been circulated, caused him much anxiety in his later days. Mr. Williams never altered his views, though before the Committee he accepted Professor Matthews' statement then made that he believed in the supernatural. In a letter received from Mr. Williams on May 24th, 1909, just previous to his death, he expressed the hope that “Professor Matthews might return to the old paths in which so many had walked in joy and safety . . . and in any case I wish him well.”

On page 10 of the report it is said:—

“While the first eight lectures are largely confined to the discussion of problems, from the ninth on the lectures are largely constructive in character.”

It is a sufficient answer to these statements to say that the most destructive teaching in the course is found in the *fifteenth*, *eighteenth* and *nineteenth* lectures, which will be seen by reference to the extracts contained in this letter.

On page 18 of the report it is said:—

“That for three years he had felt that the lectures were not well adapted to the calibre of the students then in the class, several of whom were men of very limited education and training . . . and the courses in the Old Testament were very considerably changed by the Senate, the work in introduction being placed along with religious teaching, in connection with three distinct courses, viz., Hebrew legislation, Hebrew prophecy, Hebrew wisdom.”

This, it will be noted, is a reference to the calibre of the students. The Professor was not to change his teaching, but apparently was to give the teaching to students of greater capacity.

On page 19 the Committee states:—

“They are glad, however, to report that the course of lectures has undergone reconstruction and the emphasis changed from the critical to the constructive side of the teaching.”

That Professor Matthews had altered his view there is not any evidence, or that he had changed in his teaching from the critical to the constructive side, but there is evidence showing the contrary to be the case.

THE COMMITTEE AVOIDS THE POINT AT ISSUE.

No one for one moment objects to any or all questions raised by the Higher Critics being discussed and *refuted* in the class room. The Committee says:—

“There are three ways of facing these problems. One is to ignore them altogether; the second is to recognize them, but seek to deal with each individually as it arises in the mind of the student; and the third is to state them frankly, face them, and then seek to find some solution that will stand the severest strain that may be put upon it by an age that is nothing if not scientific. Professor Matthews adopts the last of these three methods, believing that it is better for the students to face these problems in the privacy of the class room, under the sympathetic guidance of their teacher, than to meet and solve them alone unaided, as they are bound to do in after years in the course of their ministry.”

And the Committee further solemnly says:—

“And in this Professor Matthews has the hearty endorsement of the Committee.”

The question is not *how* teaching is to be done, but *how is the student left*. Are the attacks on the Old Testament to be endorsed

and added to from the Professor's chair? As to this the report is silent, while some are contending from the above sentence in the report that Professor Matthews has the "*heartly endorsation of the Committee*" in his teaching.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDE.

One views with alarm the facts brought out on the examinations of students, namely, that whilst at first strenuous opposition was made to the Professor's views and teaching, these picked young men, who were called as witnesses before the Committee, yielded largely to the Professor's position and stand as its defenders. We can now understand thoroughly the reason of the various reports of the teaching of many of our young ministers set over churches, and which come in from time to time and from so many quarters.

The following is a sample taken from the report:—

"Q. Would you say the general drift of Professor Matthews' teaching was in any sense dangerous, harmful, destructive, subversive?"

"A. I don't think so. As we understand the conservative position, Professor Matthews we would hardly call a conservative. I think he is conservative among critics. I have been told when he is among Higher Critics they think he is exceedingly conservative, especially in Chicago University. I don't think anything I got from Professor Matthews would cripple my powers in the pulpit; I don't consider so. It does not lessen my regard for the Bible a bit in any sense."

Then again the same student is asked later:—

"Q. Do you infer from what you have gained that he accepts the Old Testament as a revelation from God?"

"A. Well, I hardly know how to answer that question. Of course Professor Matthews opened this question, which was a new question to me. I had never faced this problem—the question of sources in the Old Testament, and I fought it like a tiger for pretty near the whole year; I didn't want to accept it, and I was wild at first. When he raised the question of sources I was furious, because I hadn't faced that question. . . ."

"Q. Do you think from what you have gained that he accepts the authenticity and reliability of the Old Testament?"

"A. Well, it has changed things about, because I have always been inclined to think of the Mosaic authorship, or practically that, of the Pentateuch, and when he brings the history of, and the date of the Kings, and many of those books down to a later date, and puts Amos back there as the first writing prophet, and many of those portions that were of later authorship, it changes things around."

THE CLAIM FOR LIBERTY.

In the concluding words of the report appears the following:—

“A University stands for freedom, for progress, for investigation. It must be open-doored to truth from whatever quarter, and never be guilty of binding the spirit of free inquiry; and McMaster University, a Christian school of learning under Baptist auspices, stands for the fullest and freest investigation, not only in the scientific realm, but also in the realm of Biblical scholarship. . . . Taking their stand on the Word of God alone as the supreme and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, the Baptists have ever been ready to accord to all students of the sacred oracles the largest possible measure of freedom consistent with loyalty to the fundamentals of the Christian faith.”

This part of the report was sent out to the newspapers with a blare of trumpets, as if to give the impression that the authorities of McMaster University approved of Professor Matthews in his attacks on the Old Testament. I admire the above closing sentences of the report of the Committee, setting forth as they do in forceful English the time-honored position of our Baptist people, and specially do I admire the very last sentence, “taking their stand on the *Word of God alone* as the supreme and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, the Baptists have ever been ready to accord to all students of the sacred Scripture the largest possible measure of freedom consistent with the fundamentals of the Christian faith.” But the very words above quoted are in direct contradiction to the words of the report of the worthy men who quoted them. “Taking their stand on the *Word of God alone*” is the position of the Baptists rightly enough, but side by side with it they reported that Mr. Matthews is not prepared to say that the Bible is the Word of God. “He believes that it would be nearer the truth to say that the Bible contains, rather than *is*, the Word of God, inasmuch as *if it were actually the Word of God* it would be perfect in every detail—language, syntax, chronology, etc.”—implying, of course, that it is not the Word of God. Surely that is out of accord with one of the fundamentals of our faith.

No one, I am sure, will have the slightest objection to all problems of Higher Criticism being brought to the attention of the students. They should have all these questions presented to them. No one would object to Dr. Farmer, Dr. Keirstead and Dr. Trotter being specially directed to bring the attention of the students to these problems. The question is not “Are the students to discuss

these problems?" That goes without saying. But the supreme question is, "How is the student left to be left believing or doubting?" To the teaching of Dr. Trotter I offer not the slightest objection. They stand in their teaching where the Baptist body has stood, and no one hears a breath of suspicion as to them. The entire confidence of the denomination at large. Prof. Trotter, or any other person, can hold all the vagaries of the higher criticism he pleases as to the Old Testament, and he is at liberty to proclaim them from the housetop, but he must not ask the Baptist community to give an endorsement to such views or to allow such views from his chair in the Theological Department.

THERE ARE WELL RECOGNIZED LIMITATIONS FOR BAPTIST PREACHERS AND TEACHERS

"Delivery of Unitarian or other such sermons marked with a label of Baptist is sometimes defended on the ground that Baptist Churches are places of soul liberty, and that they have been established to propagate and defend this liberty. . . . It would be natural . . . to ask if it is not a standing for the doctrine of soul liberty—Baptists intend to assert that a Methodist, a Presbyterian, a Unitarian or a Roman Catholic might reasonably or justly ask to be made preacher or teacher of Baptist Churches.

There are well recognized limitations even for Baptist preachers and teachers. One of these limitations is that they should recognize the authority of the Scriptures. . . . They are the standard of belief and life, and not what any man may think to be Christian in them. God alone can command with right the soul of man, but, for due obedience, it is needful to know what he has commanded. . . . It is in this matter of the proper authority to be trusted and followed in the matters of religious belief and life that is to be found the radical . . . difference between the Old Theology and the New. For the former, as for Baptists, this authority is the Bible; for the latter, it is the ideas and convictions of the individual soul. For the New Theology will always be found to rest, upon the last analysis, on the proposition 'I am it.'"—Dr. Burnham, Dean of Colgate University.

I do not contend that the Old Testament problems should not be agitated in the class room, nor

"That young men should be induced to hide their eyes ostrich-like, vainly dreaming that thereby all their difficulties are over."

I favor an intelligent and *reverent* study of the Bible, but recognize that these problems require in their handling great wisdom and maturity of judgment.

Attention is called to the statement on page 9, which reads thus, "With regard to Charge No. 2, that the views of Professor Matthews are purely destructive of the historicity, truthfulness and integrity of the Word of God, the Committee would be free to admit that on Prof. Matthews' teaching the idea of an absolutely infallible, inerrant Bible will have to be given up." (In the printing of the report the words "will have to be given up" which are in the report adopted by Senate have been altered to "cannot be maintained." Why, I know not.)

The Committee goes on to state, "but, as no object of animate or inanimate creation, though imperfect, ceases thereby to be of God's handiwork, etc." It will be seen that the issue is obscured by confusing "imperfection" and "errancy." It should be emphatically stated that imperfection in syntax and language does not for one moment invalidate the truth that the Bible is the Word of God and truthful in every part, even if such imperfection could be proven. Suppose, for instance, that a certain portion of the Holy Scriptures were written by a man who, whilst "borne on by the Holy Spirit," employed defective syntax, would this human element invalidate in the slightest degree the historicity and absolute truthfulness of the portion in question? Suppose that two men gave evidence in a court of law, the one an illiterate and the other an educated man. Because one employed ungrammatical and defective English, and the syntax and language of the other was perfect, would this in any way affect the truthfulness of their testimony? That no demonstrable error has been found in the Word of God is the opinion freely stated by scholars of first rank.

Dr. Augustus H. Strong, the Nestor of American Baptist theologians, in the last edition of his work on theology, speaking of the objections that the Bible contains error in history, says:—

"What are charged as such are often mere mistakes in transcription, and have no force as arguments against inspiration, unless it can first be shown that inspired documents are by the very fact of their inspiration exempt from the operation of those laws which affect the transmission of other ancient documents. . . . Diversities of statement in accounts of the same event . . . may be due to the meagreness of the narrative and might be fully explained if some single fact now unrecorded were only known."

Again he says:—

"We do not admit the existence of scientific error in the Scripture. What is charged as such is simply truth presented in popular or impressive forms. . . . It may safely be said that science has not yet shown any fairly interpreted passage of Scripture to be untrue."

Dr. Bryce, the distinguished Professor of Assyriology of the University of Oxford, in his work entitled "Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies," at page 1 says:—

"Students and critics, commentators and readers, have united in interpreting or criticizing the books of the Old Testament as if they were the production of modern Europeans. Whether the object of the writer has been to defend or to undermine their authenticity and trustworthiness, the same method has been employed, the same point of view adopted, the same principles unconsciously followed. Critic and commentator have agreed in transforming the old Hebrew authors into men like unto themselves, the representatives of an age of printing, of libraries, and of books of reference, with centuries of European thought and prejudice behind them, and imbued with all the intellectual and spiritual prepossessions of a European race. . . . It is not what we think ought to have happened which has really happened in the ancient East, nor has the history of it been recorded in the manner that seems to us most natural and fit. . . . In both England and France books have been published of late years which we know to have been the joint work of more than one writer. The novels of Besant and Rice and of Erekmann and Chatrian are familiar instances in point. They are written in languages which are both living, which embrace vast literatures, and with which we believe ourselves to be thoroughly acquainted. And yet there is no Englishman who would undertake to say where Besant ends and Rice begins in the novels which they wrote together, and no Frenchman who would venture to do so in the case of the two French novelists."

"How, then, is it possible for the European scholar of to-day to divide an old Hebrew book into its component parts, to lay down with mathematical accuracy what section of the same belongs to one writer, what to a second, and what to a third, and then to fix the relative dates of these hypothetical authors? Hebrew is a language that is very imperfectly known; it has long ceased to be spoken, only a fragment of its literature has come down to us, and that often in a corrupt state; and the meaning of many of the words which have survived and even of the grammatical forms is uncertain and disputed. In fact, it is just this fragmentary and imperfect knowledge of the language which has made the work and results of the Higher Criticism possible. The 'critical' analysis of the Pentateuch is but a measure of our ignorance and the limitations of our knowledge. What is impossible in the case of modern English or French novels must be still less possible in the case of the Old Testament Scriptures. With fuller knowledge would come a

recognition of the futility of the task. . . The varying dates assigned to the hypothetical authors of the Pentateuch, the successive strata of religious belief and custom supposed to be discoverable in it, the denial of the historical character of the narratives it contains, must all alike go with the foundation of sand upon which they have been built. An edifice reared on the subjective fancies and assumptions of the modern European scholar is necessarily a house of cards. . . Time after time the most positive assertions of a skeptical criticism have been disproved by archaeological discovery, events and personages that were confidently pronounced to be mythical have been shown to be historical, and the older writers have turned out to have been better acquainted with what they were describing than the modern critic who has flouted them."

WRONG IMPRESSION.

The impression has been given out that McMaster University is tumbling over itself to express approval of the teaching of Professor Matthews. In a statement by Rev. Dr. Hughson, a member of the Committee, recently published in the public press, he says that the men who must share with him the responsibility of the report were the following:—Frank Sanderson, L.L.D.; Rev. W. E. Norton, D.D.; Rev. J. G. Brown, D.D.; Rev. W. T. Graham, D.D.; R. D. Warren, and Chancellor A. C. McKay.

While the gentlemen above named did agree to the report, I think it is fair to say that though Dr. Frank Sanderson and one or two others may largely agree with Professor Matthews, I believe that only a few of the Committee are prepared to endorse the views of this Professor, and that their embarrassment was brought about in that they hesitated about proceeding to the extreme step of recommending his removal. A member of that Committee recently wrote me while I was absent from Toronto, as follows:—

"If an appointment were being made, I should oppose with earnestness any one holding his (Professor Matthews') views of the Scripture; but in the case of a member of the staff, holding the high conservative view of the essential doctrines of grace that Matthews assures me he does, and having the earnest evangelical spirit I am assured he has, I could not move for his dismissal."
—1 John 4: 1-3, 15.

There is, however, little advantage in discussing the names, because while Dr. Hughson points to that list of six persons who joined with him in the report, I could, on the other hand, point to six other names, namely, John Stark, Chairman of the Home Mission Board; Jos. N. Shenstone, President of the Laymen's Association of Canada; S. J. Moore, President of the Provincial Laymen's

ERRATA.

The Fourth line in Second paragraph, Page 21, should read:—
exoneration of Professor Matthews, it was moved by Dr. C.J. Hol-

The Seventh line of same paragraph should read:—
exoneration of Professor Matthews, including the much quoted

Association; Charles J. Holman, K.C., LL.D.; Christopher Cook, Brantford, S. S. Superintendent of the First Baptist Church; E. R. Hooper, M.D., Superintendent of the Walmer Road Sunday School—all members of the Senate and Board of the University, who in the meetings of the Senate have voiced their support of the conservative position on Biblical questions.

On October 21st, 1909, when the draft report of the Chancellor to the Convention then about to be held in the City of Hamilton was submitted to the Senate, including a statement of the so-called exoneration of Professor Matthews, including the much quoted man, and seconded by Mr. J. N. Shenstone, and carried by the Senate, that the part of the report with reference to the so-called exoneration of Professor Matthews, including the above quoted loud sounding words for liberty, be stricken out of the report to the Convention; not, however, because the movers opposed the liberty so nobly proclaimed, but because that clause was by its use in connection with the findings of Prof. Matthews' teaching manifestly inconsistent, as has been pointed out, and would convey a wrong impression. The following was by motion substituted for the words stricken out:—

“Questions as to the teaching of Old Testament introduction have received long and serious consideration by the Senate. These questions and the whole attitude of the University towards the Bible are of such far-reaching importance to the denomination that they require the fullest consideration possible. This consideration the responsible authorities intend to give at meetings to be called specially for this purpose at such times as may reasonably assure full attendance of the members, and the making of any further report to the Convention is deferred until after such consideration.”

Yet when the report was read at Convention the very words which had been ordered to be stricken out were read from the platform by the Chancellor, after he had read the report approved by the Senate, and were received with applause by a section of the Convention that agrees with Professor Matthews.

Subsequently at a meeting of the Senate on November 15th, all Professors in Theology were requested to give a statement in general terms of the view which in their teaching they seek to work out of the attitude of the institution toward the Bible, and at another meeting, held on December 2nd, 1909, they reported among other things that:—

"While complete freedom should be accorded in the investigation and discussion of facts, no theory should be taught in McMaster University which fails to give their proper place to supernatural revelation and inspiration, or which would impair in any way the supreme authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour."

One would have hoped that after this statement, which was signed for the benefit of the Senate by the members of the Theological Faculty, Professor Matthews would have desisted from his attacks on the Old Testament in the class room. I have received the following letter from a student in Theology during the present session, 1909-1910, which speaks for itself. As the Senate Committee kept back from the Senate and from the denomination the names of the students who gave the testimony set out in the printed report, I take the same liberty and do not give the name of the student who wrote this letter. I vouch for his being a spiritually-minded young man, amply qualified to make the statement set out in the letter, which is in the words following:—

STATEMENT OF A STUDENT OF THE PRESENT YEAR AS TO THE TEACHING
OF PROFESSOR MATTHEWS DURING THE SESSION 1909-1910.

"I do not cherish any ill-will against Professor Matthews; on the contrary, respect him very highly as a gentleman, though certainly not as a teacher of Divine things. But I feel that my love for the truth, as it is revealed in the Bible, should overbalance any love or respect that I have for human teachers. Christ taught us that father, mother, sister and brother must take subordinate place when the Lordship of Himself is considered. I thus defend my action in writing this letter, by saying that I should be willing to take my stand for the apostolic truth, no matter where it leads me, and by God's help I will.

"In speaking of the character of Professor Matthews' teachings, I will say with all the energy I possess that I believe it to be thoroughly dishonoring to the cause. . . . The Bible ceases to be the blessed Book that our youth were led to suppose it to be. Really I cannot see how a man can consent to assume the dignity of a teacher of the Word of God and yet disseminate such views as we receive in class. In general I might say that one part of the Scripture is made to antagonize another; errors are shown and magnified; the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament is challenged; yes, the integrity of the New Testament writers is called in question. Of course this is done in a round-about fashion, assuming they unconsciously committed these errors of interpretation. As far as I can judge, the Bible becomes merely a literary book; apparently no place is given to inspiration, at least after the manner of 2 Tim. 3: 16 and 2 Peter 1: 21.

"Now a few words as to its effect upon the students. I cannot, of course, be dogmatic. Negatively I feel sure that it can have no stimulating and soul-stirring effects upon the students such as they should receive prior to going out into the world to stir up others in things pertaining to the kingdom of God. But positively I believe that it has a damaging effect on students, especially those whose knowledge of the Word is very slight. I believe that personal reverence for the Bible as a Sacred Book is destroyed. But I know definitely of some who have been hurt by the teaching, whose mind has become distressed through the grievous burdens laid thereon, in the shape of problems, etc. Instead of being made confident that our message to the world is without reproach, we are given a Bible that needs exoneration.

"Now in regard to my own personal attitude to the teaching of Professor Matthews, and I can speak more definitely. I may say that I am strongly opposed to it. I cannot describe the feeling that overcomes me when I sit under it; a mingled feeling of repugnance and fear. I believe God has given me, as a child of God, spiritual instinct to detect error. I lay no claim to scholarship, but this is not necessary to warn me that such teaching is not of the Spirit. I have prayed that God will preserve me from it. To me it would be a dreadful calamity to become a holder of such views. If such were the case to-day I would go back to my secular calling, for I feel that I would have no message for the people. But, praise God, I still believe the Bible to be the infallible Word of God, shining as a bright light in a dark place to guide our feet in the ways of peace; able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and to transform us into the Divine image of Jesus, as we, by the Spirit's illumination, behold his glory in its sacred page.

"In summing it up, I would say that I feel this teaching to be damaging to the orthodox views of the Bible, hurtful to the spiritual well-being of the students, and that it takes the edge from the very instrument which the Spirit has placed in our hands to do His work."

Another instance has come to my knowledge quite unsolicited. The information was not given to me personally, but I can rely entirely upon the person who furnished it to me. It is from a student in attendance this year. He has evidently accepted views of Professor Matthews which are ordinarily held by the Higher Critics. He states that the story of the flood is self-contradictory, and the account of the creation unscientific. He expressed himself as believing that the book of Isaiah was the product of several writers, and that Israel's religion was a gradual evolution out of heathenism, etc., etc.

HARM TO THE CAUSE OF MISSIONS.

The *New York Examiner*, one of the leading Baptist news-

papers of the United States, has recently spoken on this question in these words:—

“We have been wondering how a disbeliever in the Divine inspiration, veracity and authority of the Bible, which some of us are still disposed to call the ‘Sacred Oracles,’ could venture to go out to the heathen as a Christian missionary, with the Bible in his hand, and undertake to persuade them that it was a better book than their own sacred writings. Perhaps he would begin by telling them that it is not what it purports to be, a revelation from God, but a collection of mythological character, which, of course, no intelligent person would accept as authority, but which it would perhaps do him good to read. Or he might particularize and call the attention of his auditor to the fact that while the first chapter of the mythology ascribes the creation of the world and man to God, it is really nothing but a noble ‘hymn of creation,’ having an important ethical significance, but entirely unscientific, and therefore untrue. With this promising beginning he might go on to say that the ancient patriarchs described as men with a great and far-seeing faith in God, and the recipients and inheritors of great and precious promises, were really not men at all, but myths of various sorts and degrees. Coming to the law, he would naturally explain that it was not given, as stated, through Moses, who was pretty nearly as much of a myth as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but was invented and foisted upon the people centuries later by Hebrew priests, to strengthen their authority with the people, etc., etc.

“By this time would not the intelligent Buddhist or Confucianist be inclined to protest: ‘Why have you come half way around the globe to bring us a book in which you do not believe, and to tell us of a religion no better than our own? Go back to your own land, mind your own business, and do not bother us with your myths and legends, of which we have a plenty already.’

“HUMBLE AND DEVOUT SPIRIT.”

The Committee of the Senate referred to the “humble and devout spirit” of Professor Matthews. An issue as to that has never been raised. But even one apparently of such a spirit might be led toward views whose ultimate effect is destructive. Professor Jackson, of Victoria College, Methodist, is also spoken of by those who know him well, as a beautiful Christian character, and yet in his book he says:—

“Christ, for example, assumes the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and the Davidic authorship of the 110th Psalm; modern scholarship denies both. . . . If any one is quite sure that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, if he finds in the first chapter of Genesis an anticipation of the discoveries of modern science and in the chapters that immediately follow a trustworthy historical account of the beginnings of human life and civilization . . . he

will be well advised to give these lectures the go-by. They are not for him. For I do not believe these things and I shall not hesitate to say so with perfect frankness.

"One is loth indeed to speak a word in discouragement of those who cling to the belief that Abraham and Joseph are as surely known to us as Isaiah and St. Paul, but the truth, however unwelcome, must be faced, and the truth, so far at least as our present knowledge goes, seems to be that archaology turns a deaf ear to an appeal to certify the reality of the heroes of the Book of Genesis."

Professor Foster, of Chicago, is also esteemed as possessing a beautiful Christian character, but his teachings are too notorious to require citation. He has been travelling (but longer) the same road as Professor Matthews has entered on, and has told us that Christ is the best we know, but that in years to come His name may be forgotten. The Baptist Ministerial Association of Chicago have protested against his position and have excluded him from membership.

The trouble is that some of these gentlemen are taking themselves too seriously. One learned Oxford Professor has recently said, "*The age in which we live is characterized by a monstrous conceit of itself.*" One cannot but be struck with the confidence with which mere conjecture and guesses are laid down as settled propositions due to the "Omnipotence which resides in the ink of a German scholar." It is asked "*What matters it about Abraham and Moses, so long as Jesus and His Gospel remain?*" Another has well answered "that delusion is passing away. The fact is becoming apparent to the dullest, which has long been evident to an unbiased observer, that much of the radical criticism of the Old Testament proceeded on principles and was conducted on methods which had only to be applied to the New Testament to work like havoc."

UNREST IN THE DENOMINATION.

This question of the character of the teaching touches our people in a matter of their deepest convictions, and the teaching of Professor Matthews is causing much concern. For example, at one of the recent Baptist Laymen's meetings outside of Toronto, after the addresses had been delivered one sturdy Baptist of the district arose and said that before parting with their money they wanted to know what kind of a Bible was to be given out with this money. There was no difficulty, however, in such a question being answered satisfactorily at a Baptist Laymen's meeting, be-

cause the men who are leading that work, such as J. N. Shenstone, President of the Provincial Laymen's Association; S. J. Moore, President of the Dominion Laymen's Association; Rev. Dr. Stackhouse, Secretary, and W. C. Senior, Associate Secretary, are ever ready to bear testimony to their faith in the Old Book.

I am speaking to people who believe in the Bible, as Dr. John A. Broadus, in his lifetime the able and honored Principal of the Southern Theological Seminary of Louisville, said: "I address myself to people who believe that the Bible *is the Word of God*; not merely that it contains the Word of God, which wise persons may disentangle from other things in the book, but that *it is the Word of God*."

THE QUESTION OF STUDENTS.

It is said by some timid brethren that unless we inculcate these views of Higher Criticism we cannot get students. That is a mistake. At Wycliffe College, Toronto, the Episcopalian Theological Seminary, the teaching is on the conservative side of Biblical questions, yet at its session of 1909-1910 the attendance has been the highest in the history of the school. At the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, under the Presidency of Prof. Mullins, where likewise the teaching of the German Higher Critics is discussed and refuted in the class room, they had some 320 students in the session just closed, a record-breaking attendance, the largest attendance of any Theological Seminary in the world.

AN OPPORTUNITY IS OPEN TO PROFESSOR MATTHEWS TO MAKE A CLEAR STATEMENT TO THE DENOMINATION.

I would do no injustice to Professor Matthews. I have no issue with him personally. I simply object to his attacks on the Old Testament. If his position has not been made clear and if any misunderstanding exists as to the views he holds on the subjects mentioned, or as to what he has taught, or what he is teaching, why should he not in the columns of the *Canadian Baptist* clear the sky by giving to the denomination at large an answer whether he did or did not teach as indicated in the instance above extracted exactly what Rev. Glyn Williams reported that he did, and also give a clear, definite, unequivocal statement of what he believes and what he teaches in respect to the points already indicated. If his position is not correctly understood, he ought to thank me for sending forth this letter, that he might avail himself of the oppor-

tunity to make himself clear. If he holds these views conscientiously he would be bold enough to say so. I have no personal interest to serve. I occupy no position of emolument in the denomination. I have no denominational position to be affected by speaking out. I have no reason to be on the fence. I believe my position on the Board of Governors is a sacred trust, which requires me to speak out on these vital questions. Others may keep quiet and not declare their position. I cannot. I have but one desire in this matter, that is to uphold the truth, to defend the Bible, and to give it that place where the Baptists have ever placed it.

SHOULD BAPTIST MONEY PAY FOR SUCH TEACHING?

To anyone knowing the late Senator McMaster and his well-known loyalty to the "Word of God," it seems strange that the endowment he left should be in part diverted to paying for attacks on the Bible. It is a matter of profound grief to some of the friends of the University that its work should be beclouded with doubt as to its Biblical teaching.

What think you would have been the attitude of Robert A. Fyfe to such teaching? Or of Chancellor McVicar? Or a Castle? Or a McGregor? More sympathy, I venture to say, has been alienated than can be regained in a generation. One of our Laymen, a man of means and a liberal giver, but not a member of the Board of Governors, a few days ago stated to a member of another denomination that he had in his will made a bequest to McMaster University, but in view of the objectionable teaching he had decided to strike out the bequest. This desperate attempt which we have witnessed to retain the teaching of Professor Matthews is calculated to dry up the sources of benefaction, and the full extent of the loss may never be known. On the other hand, we are satisfied that if this chair were filled with a strong man of conservative views, it would clear the atmosphere and unite again the denomination, and it would be an easy task to get ample money for Forward Movements.

WHERE THE RESPONSIBILITY RESTS.

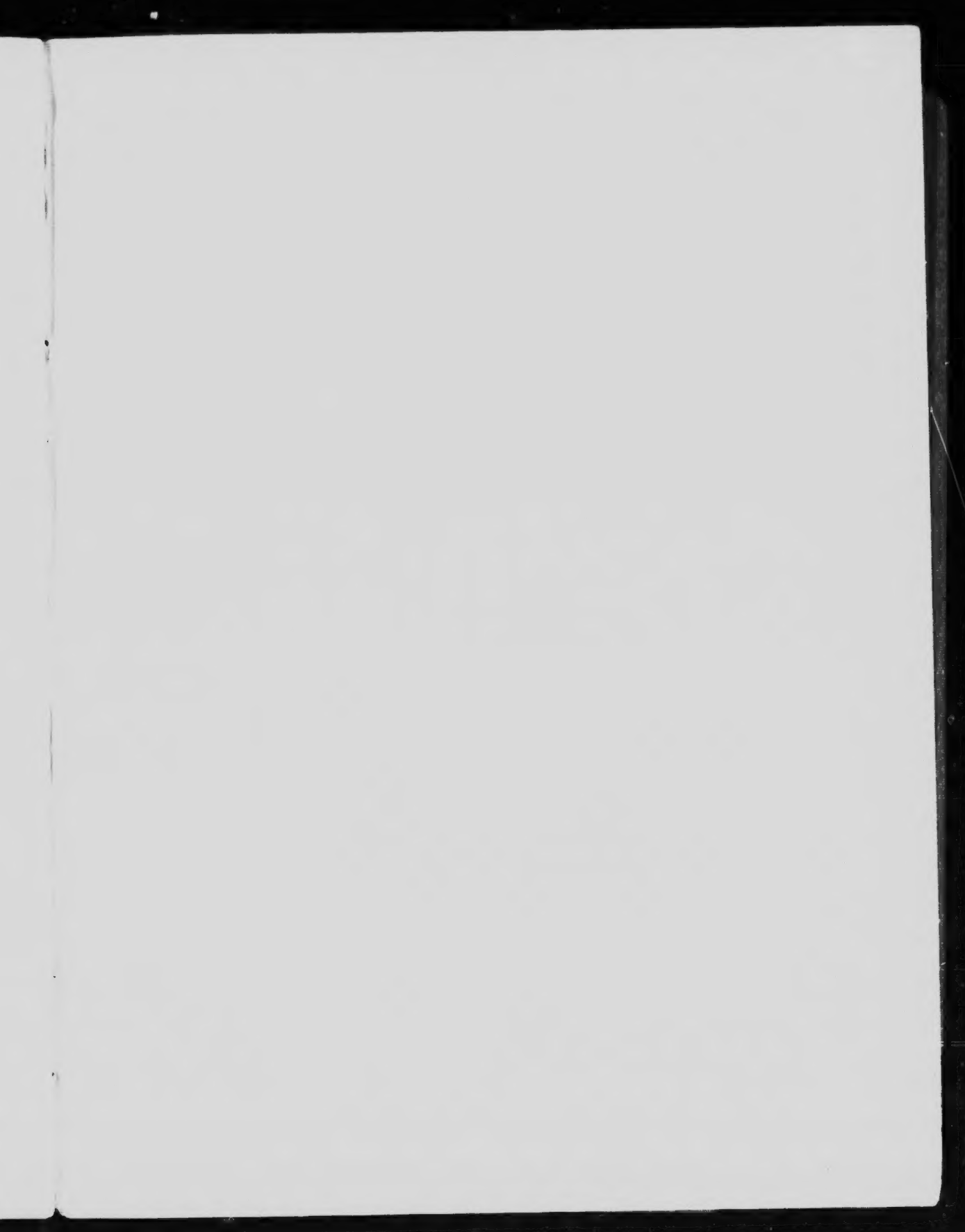
The responsibility for the teaching at McMaster rests upon the Baptists of Ontario and Quebec. The University belongs to the denomination. The Board of Governors is the one power that can appoint a Professor and the one power that can remove a Professor.

The Board of Governors is elected by the Convention of Ontario and Quebec. The teaching of McMaster will be exactly what the Baptists of this Convention authorize. If you wish the Higher Critical views inculcated, then elect members to the Board who will see that it is done. But if on the other hand you desire that the historic position of the Baptists with regard to the Bible should be maintained, then pass resolutions at the Associations and at the Convention expressing this to be your view; insist on candidates for the Board of Governors stating to the Convention their views on this question, that we may not vote in the dark, and then elect members to the Board who take the conservative position and who will vote for conservative teaching. The importance of this question in our educational work overshadows every other. Let the denomination be heard from.

If the position on this question of any member of the Committee of Seven, or any member of the Board, is misunderstood, the opportunity is open to make it clear. There ought to be no hesitation on the part of any person concerned to declare clearly where he stands on this matter.

ELMORE HARRIS

*35 Walmer Road, Toronto,
May, 1910.*





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